



# NATIONAL DAY OF SRI LANKA



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## Message

We Sri Lankans celebrate the 58th Independence Day as citizens who achieved a particularly great victory. We achieved independence in 1948 as a nation with specific aspirations and with a mandate to be equal with all other nations of the world. We know that the people of this country made good progress in that direction in the post-independence period. However, it is well known that our independence and sovereignty have been in danger in the recent past. The people of this country found a viable medium in the last Presidential Election to safeguard the

endangered sovereignty and independence of our country.

That victory, achieved by our people to make their independence meaningful, was a success for democracy. It is our bounden duty to make them realize their sovereign and independent aspirations. Our own independence struggle would provide the necessary insights in showing the way forward for us to safeguard our independence and sovereignty. Our independence struggle was not waged for one community, one group or one party alone. That struggle was carried out collectively by all communities together including the Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim, Burgher and Malay peoples. That was an effort for our motherland in which all can live together in peace and harmony.

History has it that we rose as one nation whenever we stood together, shedding our party, ethnic and group differences. No force could deny our independence. Over 2500 years of history bears testimony to this fact. I wish to reaffirm this fact on this significant occasion.

We, therefore, are engaged in the responsible task of uniting all Sri Lankans with a view to fulfilling the aspirations of the people who were victorious at the last Presidential Election. We are also engaged in the task of mobilizing all political parties for the purpose of making freedom of the people more meaningful. United we will achieve freedom. Divided we will be entrapped.

On this 58th Independence Day, we remember with deep respect and gratitude all heroes who made the supreme sacrifice for the country. We pledge not to betray this respect and the trust people have placed in us to safeguard the independence and sovereignty of this country.

**H.E. Mahinda Rajapaksa**  
President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka



## Message

As we complete 58 years of Independence, we should pause to contemplate the progress the country has hitherto made since gaining our freedom. Many other countries which had been colonised and which later gained their independence like ours, have made

tremendous advancement in the economic field.

The development of the country depends on the enthusiasm and the commitment of its people. First of all, we must love the country. Personal and narrow differences ought to be set aside and one should work with patriotism. Freedom which is an invaluable gift to man, should not be misused. Despite various hindrances, political freedom, freedom of speech and the freedom to live in any part of the country should be safeguarded.

On the day, let us salute our ancestors and all others who risked their lives and still do, to win and maintain our independence.

The names of the fallen heroes have been recorded in golden letters in the annals of the country.

Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities have been living in this island, harmoniously and peacefully from time immemorial. We should continue to maintain this further. It is our responsibility to take the necessary steps to protect the freedom of the country.

It is my fervent wish that all Sri Lankans will be able to enjoy freedom more meaningfully tomorrow than today.

**Hon. Ratnasiri Wickramanayake**  
Prime Minister of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka



## Message

Today Sri Lanka celebrates the 58th Anniversary of Independence. On this

happy occasion I wish to extend my warm greetings to the Government and the people of Bangladesh on behalf of the Government and the people of Sri Lanka.

Since the birth of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka has maintained friendly and co-ordinal relations as two neighbouring countries, who share a common cultural heritage. The historical bonds between the people of the two countries stretches back to the 6th century BC. According to the legend and folk lore of Sri Lanka the majority race in Sri Lanka, namely the Sinhalese have their roots in Bangladesh.

The friendly ties between the two countries are strengthened by the membership of regional and international organization. Both countries

are members of the SAARC, BIMSTEC, IORAC, Commonwealth, NAM and United Nations.

The friendly ties between the two countries were further strengthened in the past year by Sri Lanka's participation in the important regional conferences hosted by Bangladesh. Hosting of the 13th SAARC Summit by Bangladesh gave the member countries of the SAARC the opportunity to interact with Bangladesh closely. With the able stewardship of Bangladesh we in Sri Lanka look forward to the successful implementation of SAFTA. BIMSTEC ministerial meeting hosted by Bangladesh was another significant event which demonstrated Bangladesh Government's commitment to regional cooperation.

## Message

As we commemorate the National Day this year, let us look to the future with renewed hope of peace, economic prosperity and well being for all Sri Lankans.

The forthcoming talks between the Government and the LTTE on the Ceasefire Agreement is indeed a welcome break for all peace loving citizens of this country. I have no doubt that all Sri Lankans, whether living in Sri Lanka or abroad, who sincerely wish for lasting peace to return to our island, are happy that direct talks between the Government and the LTTE are going to resume soon, paving the way for the peace process to continue.

Another event, which has undoubtedly had a profound impact on all Sri Lankans in recent times, was the tsunami that devastated our country a little over a year ago. In commemorating the first year anniversary of the worst natural disaster the country has faced in its recorded history, President Rajapaksa highlighted the need to rise above this tragedy and to focus on emerging from it stronger and more united. We must overcome the challenges faced

by the country, the biggest being achieving a sustainable peace where all Sri Lankans can live in harmony.

I would like to take this opportunity to specifically address the Sri Lankan expatriates living in different parts of the world, as their support is invaluable to the Government's endeavor to bring rapid economic and social development to Sri Lanka.

Now, as Sri Lankans look towards the future with a new sense of optimism, the Sri Lankan Diaspora must also play a more proactive role in the country's economic development and social prosperity. Although many of you may no longer be citizens of Sri Lanka, your participation in the development of the country will provide a source of great satisfaction not only for you but for Sri Lanka as well.

Together, let us build a durable peace and create economic prosperity that will take Sri Lanka towards a brighter future where the diversity of our society can truly be celebrated.

**Hon. Mangala Samaraweera**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Implementation of SAFTA no doubt would pave the way for enhancement of trade relations between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. The holding of a single country trade exhibition in Colombo a few days ago marks an important milestone in the field of bilateral trade relationship between the two countries. I am happy to note that Bangladesh trading houses who participated at the exhibition were successful in securing firm orders from Sri Lanka. With a view to further strengthen the trade between the two countries Sri Lanka also proposes to hold a single country trade exhibition in Bangladesh during the year 2006.

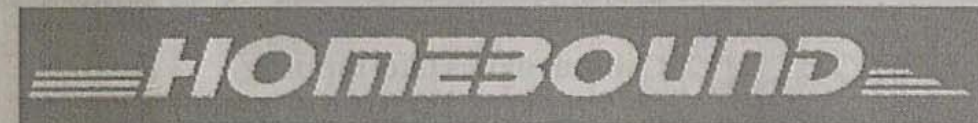
The Defence Ministry of Bangladesh and the training institutions of the three armed forces of the

country continues to give valuable support to Sri Lanka by providing training facilities to a large number of armed forces personnel from Sri Lanka. I would like to thank the Government of Bangladesh for the invaluable assistance given to Sri Lanka by providing such training.

I would like to make use of this opportunity to thank all the Sri Lankans resident in Bangladesh for the contribution they have made to strengthen relation between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. In conclusion I wish the people of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh peace, happiness and prosperity.

**Gamini S. Munasinghe**  
High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Bangladesh

## Warmest Felicitations to the Government and the Friendly People of Sri Lanka on their National Day



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## The Board of Investment of Sri Lanka

The Board of Investment of Sri Lanka celebrated on 8th April 2005 its 27th anniversary. This was a very significant event and a landmark in the economic history of the country. The Board of Investment (BOI) has its origin in the Greater Colombo Economic Commission, which was established in 1978. Fourteen years later, in 1992 the Commission was reconstituted as the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka.

The BOI is structured to function as a central facilitation point for investors. It operates as an autonomous statutory body. It has a Board of Directors drawn from the private and public sectors and several departments that are geared to facilitating the investment process.

Significantly, when you sign an agreement with the BOI, the specific incentives granted to an eligible company which may include tax holidays or preferential tax rates, exemption from customs duty and foreign exchange controls remain valid for the life of the enterprise. Successive governments cannot change the provisions and the spirit of "The Agreement". This is the fundamental strength of a BOI agreement that few other countries can offer or match. In October 2005 a total of 152 projects were approved (under section 17).

### The BOI Today

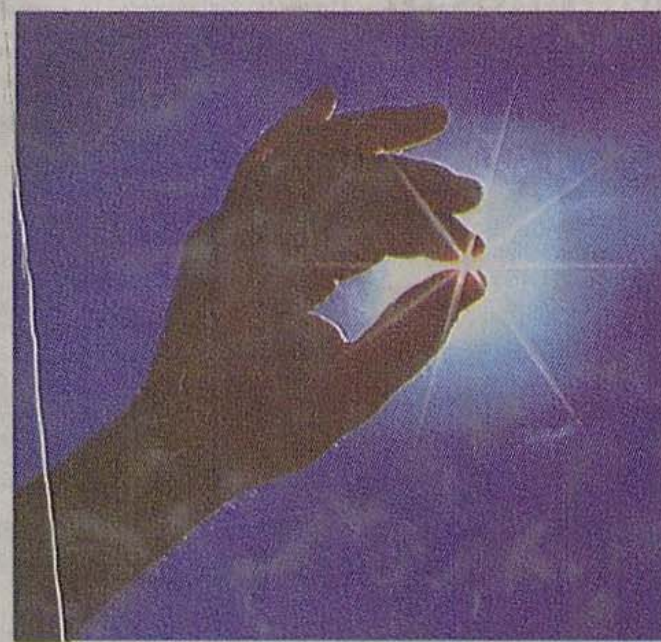
At present there are 1,760 companies that operate under the BOI regime. Their sizes and the scope of their activities vary considerably. A total of 49% are locally owned Sri Lankan investment projects while 24% are foreign owned. Jointly owned projects (i.e. Sri Lankan and Foreign) amount to 27%.

FDI has also grown in value from the previous year. In 2004 Sri Lanka attracted US\$ 234 million in FDI which was the highest figure reached by the BOI without privatizations. While the 2005 figures are not yet fully compiled, a further increase in FDI is expected.

A major objective of the BOI is to promote greater employment opportunities in the country. Companies that operate under the BOI regime currently employ more than 450,000 workers directly. This in turn has led to considerable direct employment opportunities. The major proportion of directly employed worker is now located outside the Board's 12 Export Processing Zones (EPZs). This amount to 332,000 which in turn represents no less than 74% of the total number of workers employed by BOI companies.

## Our heart felt felicitations on the National Day of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

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## With Compliments on The National Day of Sri Lanka



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